Reviewer's report

Title: Acceptability and impact on anthropometry of commercial available versus locally developed Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food in pre-school children in Vietnam.

Version: 1 Date: 1 March 2013

Reviewer: Max Oscar Bachmann

Reviewer's report:

This study investigates a potentially important subject.

The has serious limitations which cannot be corrected by revision of the manuscript:

1. A cross-over design is inappropriate when the effect of treatment is likely to persist after the first treatment period.
2. The sample size is small
3. The one week follow-up in each treatment condition is short for anthropometric changes
4. It is therefore likely that the finding of no difference in anthropometric outcomes is a result of small size and short follow-up, rather than equivalent effectiveness for the two treatments.

However it is worth reporting even underpowered randomised trials, and the differences in acceptability of the two foods are relevant to their future uptake.

There are several problems with the manuscript which could be corrected with revision:

1. There should be a sample size calculation to show whether the sample size and duration of follow-up would provide sufficient power to detect a clinically significant difference in effects.
2. The mean values or percentages of each outcome at baseline, after the first treatment period, and after the second treatment period, in each group, should be reported.
3. The estimated differences in effects of the two treatments should be reported. That is, the differences between arms in mean or percentage changes in outcomes during each treatment period, with 95% confidence intervals, should be reported. P>0.05 if uninformative, especially given the small sample and short follow-up.

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'